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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 COLOMBO 001504

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR D, SA, SA/INS, S/CT, EUR/NB, EUR/ERA;
NSC FOR E. MILLARD

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [CE](#) [XG](#)

SUBJECT: Norwegian envoy meets with Tigers in Paris; EU
chiefs of mission lambaste Tigers in public statement

Refs: (A) Colombo-SA/INS 08-27-03 unclass email
- (B) Colombo 1408, and previous (Notal)

(U) Classified by James F. Entwistle, Charge'
d'Affaires. Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: In recent peace process developments:
Norwegian Envoy Erik Solheim has been involved in
meetings with the Tigers in Paris. There are reports
that the Tigers will next visit Switzerland for further
discussions. In the meantime, the EU chiefs of mission
in Colombo issued a press statement on August 27
condemning the Tigers for a spate of recent killings.
In other news, Finnish ex-president Ahtisaari has just
wrapped up a visit to Sri Lanka in which he discussed
peace process issues. Despite all of the international
engagement in the peace track, the Tigers continue to
keep their cards close to the vest. END SUMMARY.

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Solheim meets Tigers in Paris
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12. (C) In recent peace process developments: The
Norwegian Embassy has confirmed that GoN Special Envoy
Erik Solheim met with Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
(LTTE) leaders in Paris on August 27. Solheim will
probably meet them again today (August 28).
(Note: Since late last week, several Tiger leaders and
pro-LTTE Tamils have been holding an "in-house" meeting
in Paris, which is now wrapping up.) Re the substance
of Solheim's meeting, Norwegian embassy poloff Kjersti
Tromsdal told us that the special envoy had discussed
the GSL's recent proposal for governing the north/east
with LTTE political chief S.P. Thamilselvam and other
pro-LTTE Tamils. Tromsdal said Solheim had received
indications during the meeting that the Tigers remained
on schedule to provide their counter-proposals to the
government by late September. If all went well, talks
between the two sides may be in position to recommence
later this year. (Note: There are also reports that
representatives of the "Forum of Federations," a
Canadian NGO, met with the LTTE in Paris.)

13. (SBU) Tromsdal also confirmed press reports that
some of the participants in the Tigers' meeting in Paris
would next travel to Switzerland. Tromsdal was not
certain of the LTTE team's meeting schedule there, but
thought the Tigers were slated to hold discussions
regarding federalism with Swiss government officials and
other figures.

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EU Lambastes LTTE
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14. (SBU) In the meantime, the chiefs of mission of
European Union countries in Colombo issued a press
release late August 27 condemning the Tigers for a spate
of recent assassinations. The statement, which received
solid coverage in the local media, asserted that "such
atrocities are morally indefensible, jeopardize the
ceasefire agreement and threaten to undermine
international and domestic confidence in the peace
process." The statement also urged a resumption of
peace negotiations between the LTTE and the GSL, and, in
a reference to an unauthorized Tiger camp in eastern Sri
Lanka, called on the LTTE to "accept all rulings of the
(Norwegian-run) Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission." Italian
Ambassador Salvatore Zotta told the Charge' that the
statement would be issued in Rome and Brussels today.
(Note: The text of the statement was provided to SA/INS
in Ref A and it is also provided in para eight.)
Mission has not picked up any reaction by the LTTE to
the EU statement as of yet.

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Visit by Finnish ex-President
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15. (C) In other news, Marti Ahtisaari, the former
Finnish president, visited Sri Lanka at the invitation

of President Kumaratunga, August 23-25. At a meeting chaired by Lakshman Kadirgamar, a former foreign minister, and local think-tank experts, Ahtisaari received a briefing on the peace process. Kethesh Loganathan, an analyst at the Center for Policy Alternatives, told us August 28 that Ahtisaari listened carefully to the briefing, offering comments based on his experiences with the UN and elsewhere. In his public remarks, Ahtisaari expressed strong support for the peace track, urging parties in the south to work together in the national interest.

16. (C) Ahtisaari's visit was a bit controversial. EU Delegation chief Wouter Wilton told the Charge' that Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, apparently upset that Ahtisaari was visiting at the invitation of his rival, President Kumaratunga, turned down a meeting request. Wilson said he later was able to convince the PM to speak to Ahtisaari on the phone. According to Wilson, Ahtisaari conveyed the same message to both leaders: "grow up" and start working together on the peace track. The Norwegians were also reportedly miffed at Ahtisaari over seemingly critical words he had for the Norwegian facilitators which were cited in the press. Tromsdal told us that Ahtisaari later called Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar to say he had been misquoted. Ahtisaari said he had meant to say that facilitation was a difficult undertaking, but that the Norwegians should continue their efforts.

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COMMENT
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17. (C) Despite all of the international engagement in the peace track, e.g., Solheim's meetings, the LTTE's possible trip to Switzerland, Ahtisaari's visit, etc., the Tigers continue to keep their cards close to the vest. Although the group has made some positive sounds, there is still no firm indication if or when it plans to come back to the talks. At this point, the government has few other options but to keep playing along. As for the EU statement, it follows closely on the key points the U.S. made in its August 6 press statement (see Ref B). END COMMENT.

18. (U) The EU chiefs of mission August 27 press statement follows:

Begin text:

The Heads of Mission of the European Union in Colombo wish to express their concern at the recent spate of politically-motivated murders in Sri Lanka. The victims have included Tamil politicians, Muslim private individuals and people connected with the security forces. Such atrocities are morally indefensible, jeopardise the Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, and threaten to undermine international and domestic confidence in the Peace Process.

In that respect, the Heads of Mission take note of the recent findings of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

The Heads of Mission emphasize the importance of the Ceasefire Agreement as a cornerstone of the Peace Process. It is essential that both parties adhere to its provisions and accept the rulings of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission. Such an approach would provide the best means of ending the current impasse over the establishment of the Kurankupanchan Camp. Recalling the conclusions of the Tokyo Conference, the Heads of Mission stress that assistance by the donor community will be closely linked to substantial and parallel progress in the Peace Process. This progress must include full compliance with the Ceasefire Agreement, the protection of interests of all communities, the effective promotion of the human rights of all people and the respect for democracy and rule of law.

In that context the Heads of Mission hope that the LTTE's current deliberations will lead to their resuming participation in the Peace talks at an early stage.

End text.

19. (U) Minimize considered.

ENTWISTLE